"Truth Is One, Men Call It By Various Names." —RIG VEDA

VEDANTA QUARTERLY

Message of the East

VOLUME XXXVIII 1949 NUMBER 4

EVANSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
EVANSTON, ILL.
DEC 27 1949

WINTER ISSUE

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER-DECEMBER

CONQUEST OF FEAR

Issued by

THE VEDANTA CENTRE
420 BEACON STREET, BOSTON 15, MASSACHUSETTS

THE ANANDA ASHRAMA
BOX 577, LA CRESCENTA, CALIFORNIA

SINGLE COPIES 75c $3.00 A YEAR

CONTENTS

A Christmas Letter. ..... *Swami Paramananda*
Conquest of Fear. ..... *Swami Paramananda*
Studies in the Bhagavad Gita. ..... *Sister Devamata*
Indian Summer. Poem. ..... *Sister Daya*
When Peace Comes. ..... *Gayatri Devi*
In the Name of My People. ..... *Nipo-Strongheart*
Fragments of Wisdom. ..... *Swami Vivekananda*
From a Disciple's Notebook. ..... *Continued from Fall Issue.*
Report.

COMING EVENTS

VEDANTA CENTRE, 420 Beacon St., Boston, Mass.
Services: Sun. 11 A.M. and 8 P.M.
Gayatri Devi in charge
Class: Tues. 8 P.M.

ANANDA-ASHRAMA, La Crescenta, California
Services: Sun. 11 A.M. and 3:15 P.M.
Sister Daya in charge
Class: Thurs. 8. P.M.

AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

It is with regret we announce the change in price of the subscription of THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST. Due to the increasing cost of publication, it has become imperative. From now on the yearly subscription will be $3.00 and single copies 75c. Kindly send all subscriptions to The Vedanta Centre, 420 Beacon Street, Boston 15, Massachusetts, or to the Ananda Ashrama, Box 577, LaCrescenta, California.

All of Swami Paramananda's works and other Vedanta literature, as well as the publication, "Message of the East," may be obtained directly from Vedanta Centre, 420 Beacon St., Boston 15, Mass., and from Ananda Ashrama, Box 577, La Crescenta, Calif. They are obtainable also from the following addresses:

New York City: Brentano. 586 Fifth Ave.; Baker & Taylor Co., 55 Fifth Ave.; Samuel Weiser, 117 Fourth Ave.

Entered as second class matter, March 26th, 1930. at the Post Office at Boston, Mass., under act of March 3rd, 1878. Accepted for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized June 17, 1921.

Copyright by The Vedanta Centre, 1949.

"Truth Is One, Men Call It By Various Names." —RIG VEDA

VEDANTA QUARTERLY

Message of the East

VOLUME XXXVIII

Issued by

THE VEDANTA CENTRE

420 BEACON STREET, BOSTON 15, MASSACHUSETTS

SINGLE COPIES 75c $3.00 A YEAR

Entered as second class matter March 26, 1930 at the Post Office at Boston, Massachusetts, under the act of March 3, 1878

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/message-of-the-east_winter-1949_38_4

Message of the East

"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."
—*Ezekiel*
"Light shall come again from the East."

VOL. XXXVIII 1949 NUMBER 4

A CHRISTMAS LETTER

All our efforts, when made with sincerity and unselfishness, cannot but produce good fruits and far-reaching blessings. We are all His children and can be perfect channels for the manifestation of His glory, if we are only devoid of ego or lower self. This state of self-surrender or selflessness is indeed blessed and is the very height of divine wisdom. But let us not confound it with the idea of self-annihilation. On the contrary, this is the only way we may gain a hold on our true Self and understand its relation with the Divine.

More we realize the Divine, humbler we grow and better fitted we are for His service. The tree which is full of fruits bows its head, as if in meekness and humility, while the fruitless, barren tree stands erect. Similarly those of us whose life is full of love, charity and the fruits of nobleness are always the humblest.

Was He not the most selfless and lowly of all, whose birth was a consecration to all humanity? Did He not preach this one ideal through and through His life? "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." To worship Jesus the Christ truly, we must try to live as He lived and practise silently what He taught, because this alone will develop the Christ qualities in us and enable us to realize Him. Assimilation is the surest sign of appreciation of an Ideal. This we can accomplish only by living the life.

Holy Christmas should reign in our hearts every day, nay,

every moment of our existence, so that we may prepare ourselves better for each Christmas, until we become the very center of Christlike love and tolerance. This is not possible for us to accomplish through intellectual grasp or scholarly study; but through humble service and devotion only it can be attained. Neither can we please the Lord by mere words of flattery. He knows our hearts and we are judged by that alone. This reminds me of a little parable:

Once a rich man had two gardeners. One of them was very lazy and did nothing; but when the master came to visit the garden, he praised his looks and expressed his devotion by all manner of flattering words. The other one, on the contrary, worked faithfully, said little, and brought and offered to his master all the flowers and fruits of his labor. With which one was the master pleased? Certainly with him who had genuine love and gave him true service.

Therefore, let us not delude ourselves and waste our time in vain words or arguments, but live the life faithfully according to our humble capacity. Not a single thought or word or act of unselfishness is ever lost. He dwells within our hearts and He knows what is there. Therefore, in order to worship Him truly, let us each cleanse his heart and make it a fit shrine for Him to dwell in.

Ever yours in the Lord

—*Paramananda.*

To realize God a man must follow one path with all his strength. But you must regard other views as so many paths leading to God. You should not feel that your path is the only right path and that other paths are wrong. You must not bear malice toward others. —*Sri Ramakrishna.*

The struggle of today is not altogether for today. It is for a vast future also. —*Abraham Lincoln.*

CONQUEST OF FEAR

By Swami Paramananda

With all earnestness and openness of heart,

Let us offer our prayers unto the Supreme Being of the great universe.

Let us pray for the good of many, for the safety and security of all God's Children.

May that Infinite Being — our Mother, Father, Friend, and our abiding Shelter — bestow upon us His loving and abiding protection.

Amid all the varying circumstances of this world, may He make us strong and unwavering in our faith in Him.

May He surround us with His tender blessings,

And keep us ever and ever in peace.

Peace, peace, peace be unto us and to all living beings.

The conquest of fear is a conquest that is most needed today, because of our present fear complex which is assuming tremendous proportions. Both in ancient and modern times it has been recognized that fear often attracts to us the thing we dread. Job said, "The thing I greatly feared hath come upon me!" and through our study of modern psychology we have learned the same truth. The person who is all the time afraid of having an accident, such as a broken limb or something of that sort, generally seems to have it. It is very simple to understand: he draws it toward him.

Every person has a certain amount of power, and when this power is united, as in a nation or in any form of mass thinking, it can draw down great good or the reverse, according to the nature of the thought.

Upon one occasion, when I was speaking before a convention — a Peace Conference I think it was — I made an observation. I said that it seemed very strange to me that while

everyone was talking peace, at the same time everyone was going headlong in the opposite direction. We witness this process every day. We want to be free from accidents, yet how aften we say: "I fear this is going to happen!" From a psychological point of view that is a very wrong statement; because whatever we fear we manage to bring upon ourselves.

In my early days I learned a slogan from one of the great Sanskrit classics that has always helped to sustain me: "The knower of Truth — of God — fears nothing. His heart is filled with *Anandam!*" *Anandam* means bliss, and only where there is a great abundance of happiness or bliss within the soul, can peace be found.

Fear has created a tremendous calamity for mankind. Students of crime and its causes have found that men who do terrible things are really afraid. One of my friends told me that soldiers who go to the battle-front often have to be given a drink made out of ether and some other substances, in order to stimulate them and make them forget their fears and their dreads. Same way, when we are faced with some acute condition in our daily life and are not able to rest, a friend or a member of the family will come and suggest to us that when we go to bed we take a dose of something that will relax the mind so that we can forget. We do this and fall into a heavy sleep, but when we wake up the next morning we have an even greater struggle. We do not conquer fear that way.

When I was very young, someone said to me: "You have no fear, have you?" I replied that I was not conscious of having any. About that same time I came in contact with a man — a very stalwart, fine-looking man — whose chief interest was conquering animals. His experiences had a great effect on my mind during those early years, and just as

little Western boys dream of becoming aviators, I dreamed of becoming an animal trainer.

This man told me how he had started his career. He said that late one afternoon he was going home, following a game of cricket. It was about the twilight hour. He was all alone and he had a long way to walk through the jungle. Suddenly he heard a little noise in the brush. He looked and saw a creature crouching, ready to jump upon him. It was a little panther, very fierce.

In India we have a tradition that though a lion may be tamed, one can never tame a panther or a tiger. So the man was interested and immediately made up his mind to stand and meet the attack. The panther jumped, but he was ready for him. They struggled; they had a regular wrestling match; but in the end he overcame the panther and brought him home. His family was frightened, but he reassured them. He made a cage in which to keep the panther and wrestled with him every day. At that time he was only seventeen years old. Later on he made it a habit to wrestle with larger and stronger animals. He said that animals always know whether or not you are afraid. If you are brave, you are their master and they will obey you. Fear causes a certain odor to emanate from you. So also does courage.

When we study the great sayings which India has preserved as a spiritual legacy, we find this statement: "The Spirit of man is indestructible: fire cannot burn it, water cannot wet it, sword cannot pierce it, air cannot dry it!" Nothing could be more clearly stated, but nevertheless man is afraid. Therefore we need to cultivate something which will overcome fear.

How shall we find an escape? Emerson says: "They conquer who believe they can. He does not learn the lesson of life who does not each day surmount the lesson of fear."

These are wonderful sayings, yet the fact remains that though we have such slogans printed on cards and hung upon our walls, we go on being fearful. Philosophers have tried to give us reasons why we should not fear; but they cannot help us until we have found the Truth which purifies us, and makes us invincible.

We gain nothing by being afraid. Some years ago I was in Louisville, Kentucky, at the time of the Derby. The afternoon of the race my host said: "Would you like to go to see a new movie?" I consented, so we went there. The place was crowded. All at once there was an explosion, and then a little fire and smoke. Hundreds of people jumped up and began to run, and whenever people run in fear, they hurt themselves and others. I laid my hand on my friend's arm and said: "Let us wait." It was not for long. The manager reassured us and soon everything was under control. It does not pay to be panic-stricken.

I am reminded of the famous illustration of illusion given by the great sage Sankara: the illustration of the snake and the rope. A man goes out at night and right at his feet he sees what he thinks is a large snake. Terrified, he gives a loud cry, and at once people come running with torches to see what has happened. He tells them he has been bitten by a cobra. "Where is it?" they ask. "There! there!" he says, "Do you not see it?" They look and find a harmless bit of rope which in his mind has assumed the shape of a deadly serpent. When he sees it in the light, when he understands there is no harm from it, he becomes bereft of fear—calm and collected. Yet a moment before, though no snake was there, he had been almost at the point of collapse. How do we account for it? How strange it is that we can be so filled with fear that our whole being becomes paralyzed, and we are even able to shed a paralyzing influence upon others.

The antidote for fear is courage, and courage comes when man's heart is enlightened with Truth. Today, in spite of all our mechanical achievements, morally we have declined. When a person is under pressure, although he knows that gain and loss, success and failure cannot wash his soul away, still he is fearful. Socrates once said to a disciple: "You seem to think the soul of man can be blown away by a gust of wind." The disciple said: "Please consider us as little children. We are really frightened."

My suggestion is: Keep your fears to yourself. If you can share thoughts of courage — thoughts of life, of strength, of buoyancy — do so; *but keep your fears to yourself!* Swami Vivekananda was sometimes very drastic. He said once to a disciple: "When you get into these dark moods, do not come to me. Go and shut yourself in a closet, and do not come out until you are rid of them."

"It is only the fear of God which can deliver us from the fear of man." I think I shall change this quotation a little. Love is a much more appropriate word: "It is only the *love* of God which can deliver us from the fear of man." That love comes only when we have our heart filled with Truth, and we can have it so filled only when we are able to love. Love and Truth are just like two lovers. They do not have to make an effort to think of each other. They even grow to look alike. When the human heart becomes filled through the channel of Love, then the Great Spirit of Truth delivers man from fear. Do not grow analytical and say: "What is that Great Spirit?" If we do not know, we have not tried very hard to find out. We have neglected that aspect of our being.

Most people believe in the protection that is derived from arms; but it proves a tragic protection. How many of us think of arming ourselves with thoughts and feelings of har-

mony, and an atmosphere of peace? It would be our greatest safeguard.

It is when we are in danger that we are apt to think of such things. In times of danger, men and women instinctively kneel and begin to pray, and this prayer opens a new vista. How much better it would be if we opened our mind and soul habitually. Even our body would benefit by it. "Prayer brings peace. At least it should. A strength and consolation that nothing else can give; but it must be from the heart. When it is not offered from the heart it is like the beating of a drum, or the vocal effect of throat sounds. When it is offered from the heart it has the power to melt mountains of misery. Those who want are welcome to try its effect."

This was written by someone who, I think, knows its working. Gandhi wrote these lines. We should not wait until we are under pressure, until we are threatened with something terrible, before we look to God.

The best way to conquer fear is to increase our trust in the Divine. "Away with all fear, when it is the Lord that guides your feet!" Sri Ramakrishna said. "The Lord is your Friend. Hold Him fast and He will lead you by the hand." There is no fear in love. That is the remedy. If you want to conquer fear, give up your distrust, give up your doubt, give up your thoughts of vengeance and intolerance. You ask: "How can I do this? Someone had done me harm. I am afraid of him. I must hurt him or he will hurt me."

Oh, no! If you hurt him, he will hurt you. You may ask: "But is it possible for us in a practical way to love our enemies?" It is the only way we can preserve ourselves. "Perfect love casteth out fear," said the Christ. "The purified soul will fear nothing!" writes Plotinus. No man loves another whom he fears. Fear is the rust of life, destroying

its brightness. A childlike trust in God is the best remedy. A child lies in his mother's arms, perfectly relaxed. He never thinks that his mother cannot protect him. That is the attitude when we have come to a definite understanding of the Great Shepherd. But we must not merely say it in so many words, we must *feel* it; then our conviction will create a beautiful atmosphere.

Swami Vivekananda tells the story of a man who was walking through an Indian forest. He was absorbed in his thoughts when suddenly he heard a sound. He looked back and saw following him a monkey as big as himself. Fear arose from his subconscious mind and he began to run. The monkey pursued him. He ran faster, at which a number of other monkeys joined in the chase. There was no end to his trouble till someone who happened to pass by, called out to him: "You foolish man! Why do you run away from them? Turn and face the brutes!" As soon as he did that, the monkeys vanished.

When you run away from your trouble, your trouble pursues you. It is the same with all of us when we try to run away from circumstances. Swami Vivekananda's story contains a wonderful lesson. It shows us that as we learn to face our problems, there is always sufficient strength, no matter how weak we feel. When you have a problem to face, there is a corresponding strength within you to meet it. I have always taken this as my simple motto. As Emerson says: "Never strike sail to a fear." If you do, the wind may come up and throw you against a rock.

Fearless mind is a very wonderful mind. I have seen some people who were absolutely without resources, yet they had no fear; they were not afraid of starvation although they had no food. They were great spiritual brothers who went forth unarmed and unaccompanied.

There are very few people who are not afraid. They try to arm themselves in one way or another, and often they go to fortune-tellers in order to find out how they are going to fare. Evangeline Adams, the famous astrologer, used to have an important center in Boston. In her book she tells how people used to come to her for help. They thought that by knowing what was ahead of them, they could avert it. When they were told, however, of future dangers, they often began to brood, and were unable to think of anything else. It would have been better if they had sought to make their minds free and clear of all doubt. It was a wrong solution for their problems.

In India we have a very simple suggestion that people who are not well versed in philosophy can follow, it is this: instead of letting harrowing thoughts take hold of your mind, fill it instead with prayer. We know too much of philosophy already. What we need is the practical application. When our heart is filled with fear, let us bring in an antidote.

You may say, "What shall I do? These rushing thoughts of fear come upon me." But if you allow your mind to go round and round, your whole vitality will be exhausted. It is a very injurious thing for us to indulge in thoughts of fear, hate, doubt and the spirit of vengeance. There is an alliance between all these forces of darkness. If you think you cannot live without being resentful toward someone, then direct your mind away from such feelings. In my community occasionally one of the members will say: "I cannot love so-and-so." I say: "Stop thinking of her. You had better take a mental vacation from that person. There are plenty of things you can love and admire."

There is an actual manifestation in our outer life and being of what we carry in our consciousness. The man who is constantly conscious of the physical body is full of aches

and pains. Some people are paralyzed with fear when they hear thunder. But do not think that by hiding your face you are going to overcome these troubles.

Bring in the Light! I do not mean just outer light. We thought that science was going to solve our problems. Our cities could be brightly lighted and therefore there would be less danger of fear and crime. It has not worked that way. It is the inward Light that we have to have. Part of our being is covered with darkness; but as soon as we bring in the Light we are no longer afraid, because we can see everything before us. For Truth, God, the Lord, whatever we may call It, is the symbolic Light and the symbolic Strength for man. Why then should we fear?

A most pernicious thing is our distrust of others. There is a story I have often told you of a man who was in the desert alone. Naturally when we are alone, unless we have a sense of the Divine Presence, we are often very much afraid. This man saw something coming toward him, and from a distance he thought it was an evil spirit. Could there be anything else there in the desert, he asked himself. As it came closer, he saw that it was a man, and he was glad. Still it might be an enemy. So he waited and when he and the stranger came face to face, he found it was his brother from whom he had been separated for many years. Instead of fear, danger and discomfort, there was rejoicing.

Often we are afraid of things because we do not know anything about them. When, however, we come face to face with them — especially when we view them from the spiritual angle, from the point of view of Truth — we find that all sense of danger vanishes.

Not long ago when I was traveling across the continent, I happened to sit next to a young sailor. He was alone and seemed to want to talk to me. He appeared to be full of re-

sentment against life and God. He said: "I have a terrible feeling against all priests." "Have you?" I said. "Why is that?" He said: "I have just buried my buddy, my very best friend. How can there be a God when such a thing happens?" "How do you know it was not the best thing for him?" I asked. "Perhaps he is relieved from his suffering. He may be better off, and you may be creating torment for him because of your attachment."

After a time the weight seemed to fall away from him and we became very friendly. Before we parted he asked if he could come and work at our Ashrama. I have not seen him since; but I learn every day that this strange state of consciousness which we carry with us, made up of suspicion, fear, doubt, bars our way to constructive human contact. Each man is arming himself against the other; yet we possess all the slogans from the Bibles of the world, and surely no one can prove from them that a man should live doubting and hating and fearing.

The only way to overcome all this is to fill our mind and heart with the light of Love and Truth, till there is room for nothing else. Just how you should do this you will have to work out for yourself. You may not be able to work it out like a Christ or a Buddha, but potentially you have within you the same power. Get rid of all negation. Raise yourself by your own inherent strength.

Today with all these impending dangers and difficulties, we have, each one, our individual faith. Perhaps we think: "If only I could get a million people to take part in my cause the world would be saved." What the world needs is the living example. It wants people who manifest the Ideal: people who are not terrified; who are calm, serene: people who though living under the same conditions as the rest of us, with the same sense of gain and loss, yet seem to be untouched

in spirit. When we contact such a person, we may ask: "What is it that sustains him?" We shall find it is his thought. By thinking in the right way, men fortify themselves.

It may be natural for us to be afraid; but we can correct that. We, individually, need to try to lift the burden of the world. You have your share; I have mine; but when every one does his part, the task becomes almost insignificant and the whole problem melts away.

Whenever we see someone who is doing his part — not just by words, but by being and becoming — someone who has tasted an inward joy and does not live only in this body, but is aware of That which is unalterable within him; whenever we meet such a person, we are inspired to do likewise, and in this way (by one inspiring another) peace becomes a reality in men's hearts.

Conquest of fear, anger and hate can only take place in a practical way when we have found the secret within ourselves. There is a majestic humanity within this gross humanity. Within the "eating, drinking, sleeping man" who is susceptible to all these calamities, there is one who is pure and invulnerable. We bend our knees before that inner man.

Man offers himself as a sacrifice for all that lies in the future; the motive power which guides the course of his growth is expectation. Our greatest men bring in their life the message of man's future birth; for they dwell in the time to come, making it ready for ourselves. They reveal to us a life whose glory is not in the absence of suffering, but in the fact that its sufferings have been made creative, transmuted into the stuff of life itself. It is like the tree which garners the sun's heat and light in its fiber and breaks out in beauty of fruitfulness.

—*From "Thought Relics" by Rabindranath Tagore.*

STUDIES IN THE BHAGAVAD-GITA

From Class Talks by Sister Devamata

Happiness can never be the direct purpose of life. Real happiness may be said to be a by-product. It is something that comes when we are striving for something else. The very moment we make happiness the goal of our striving, we fail to attain it, because such striving has always an element of self-seeking, and wherever the self, or ego, is present, there real happiness cannot be. Thus we are told in the Bhagavad-Gita, at the end of the second chapter: "As the ocean remains calm and unaltered though the waters flow into it, similarly a self-controlled saint remains unmoved when desires enter into him; such a saint alone attains peace, but not he who craves the objects of desire."

A man is never happy save when he is in rhythm with the cosmic plan; that is, when he is in the right place at the right time and moving in the right direction; and for this "right" there is only one gauge: the Supreme. When we are coveting anything, be it a place or a person or a condition, if we could but realize that one thing and one thing alone can bring real and abiding happiness, and that is to move in accordance with the Divine Will, we would save ourselves the misery of reaction and disillusionment. There is, however, one exception to this general rule. If we are fortunate enough to come in contact with one who is a pure channel for the Divine, we may experience a taste of genuine happiness, because his nearness to Divinity gives him power to lift other people to a higher level and to reflect into their hearts the light that is in his own. But even then those hearts must be open to receive it.

The plan of the universe is so carefully worked out, so consecutively compact, that there is for each one of us at

every moment, just one place to be. When we are in that place, we are with God. If we are not there, then God is not with us: He is in our place, doing our work. This is true for the whole scheme of things in Nature. We see that every object has its own niche to fill — in the spring, in the summer, in the autumn. Every little insect has its task. Take the earthworms, for example; we give them no thought, yet there is work for them to do each day. Likewise we have special tasks in the universe at every instant of our lives, and only when we are accomplishing these are we united with God, the Source of happiness or bliss. When we realize this, instead of spending all our energies in trying to find happiness, we shall direct them toward Him; for once being united with Him, all happiness shall be ours and we shall be kept in the right place at all times and in all conditions.

We should try to prevent personal or individual desires from rising in our mind, because they bring a dividing influence. He who has really set out on this higher path has but one thought: "Where do I belong at this moment? At this very instant there is some special place, some special task for me; there is only one thing for me to do, only one word for me to say, only one way for me to breathe in order to be in rhythm with the great cosmic Breath."

The man who is in his proper place and working according to the universal scheme of things, in harmony with the Divine Will, is invariably happy. The joy of Christ on the Cross, I feel sure, outweighed every bit of the pain. When we have been allowed to sacrifice ourselves for another, and still more, when we have been given the strength to do it, how joyful we are! It may mean going hungry when we long for food; it may mean giving up something that we have dreamed of obtaining, in order that someone else may obtain it; we are conscious only of the happiness, not of the loss.

There is no loss. Nothing is equal to the joy of such self-sacrifice, and that is the kind of joy that is meant here, when nothing counts except the unification of our little will with the Great Will.

Thus in the Bhagavad-Gita it is said that one who acts without any sense of I, me, or mine, obtains bliss. This is dwelling in God. He who attains this state is never again deluded. What does it mean, that he will never again be deluded? It means that he will never again be deluded by any foolish desires. He simply says that he would like to be in God and with God, and move with the Will of God, that is all. No glamour of the world can possibly cloud his mind. The man who attains this state, even at the end of his life, enters into union with God. He has not tried to be happy; he has not tried to escape from any pain or any discipline, or any difficult Karma: he has not tried for anything except just to give up the little self and let God take him. With this thought the second chapter ends.

The third chapter begins with a question: "O Krishna, if to Thy mind the path of wisdom is superior to the path of action, then why art thou engaging me in this terrible action? By these seemingly conflicting words thou art bewildering my understanding; therefore tell me with certainty that one of these, by following which I can attain the Highest?"

Arjuna, who at the start was so completely overpowered by doubt and confusion that he did not know what to do, now is beginning to discriminate. This is a very encouraging sign, and it is true also for us. So long as we sit around and take things unthinkingly, follow some beaten track without question, or ask merely foolish, surface questions, it is extremely difficult for any teaching to reach us. But just as soon as our questions begin to have some depth to them, and show the result of thought and discrimination, then we may know that it is impossible for us not to learn.

Every question we ask from the real fulness of our heart will invariably bring an answer. It may come through some unexpected source. Sometimes a person who has asked a question may pick up the scriptures or some other holy book that will give him the exact counsel he needs, or someone will speak the words that he wishes to hear, but always the question that springs from the depth of the heart has the promise of the answer within it.

Now at this point in the Gita, Arjuna is confused, as we too are often confused. The Lord has told him about the path of action and now he seems to show him that the path of wisdom is a far higher path. This has bewildered Arjuna's understanding, and so he says to the Lord: "Tell me which one of these two paths is the better." The Lord replies that both paths lead to the goal, to liberation, but of these two the path of action is superior to the path of renunciation or wisdom. What he means is that it is foolish to suppose that we can simply sit down and do nothing but meditate. "The path of wisdom," He says, "is for the meditative and the path of work is for the active."

It is a significant fact that throughout these first six chapters which deal with Self-knowledge scarcely anything is said about meditation; it is all concerning action. The chapter on the Path of Wisdom deals just as much with action as the chapter on the Path of Work. There is only one way that we can know ourselves, and that is by seeing ourselves in action. We have to work it out. By that process of purification gradually the vision becomes clear.

There is no reason at all for people to bemoan the fact that they have very little time for meditation. Probably they have the time if they want to take it, although they always claim that they have not; they do have time and opportunity, however, for spiritual practice, because the first practice on

the path of wisdom is the right performance of action. So the Lord tells Arjuna: "A man does not obtain freedom from action by giving up or abstaining from action." That is only laziness. There is but one way that we shall ever reach a more serene life and that is to keep right on with the outer things that we are doing and begin to change from within. When we cease to rush less on the inside we shall not have to rush so much on the outside.

Time does not exist except in the mind. There is no such thing as time as an objective reality. Time exists in us and it is measured by the interval between two thoughts. That is all that gives us any idea of time. A slow succession of thoughts gives us the idea that time is moving slowly. When we begin to have larger ideas of life, a greater sense of obligation toward the real things of existence, time for us will move in a more measured tempo and our sense of rush will go. We create it for ourselves. Even in the busiest hour we have leisure for spiritual practice, because we can turn that very occupation into practice. It is not by ceasing from action that we are freed from action, it is by a growing awareness of something within us which readjusts our sense of values. In other words, we have to realize that our actions are springing not from external conditions and obligations but from that in us which responds to those obligations.

We have two obligations every moment of our life; one is to the lower self and to the world, with which the lower self is related, and the other is to the Higher Self and to God, with whom the Higher Self is related. So long as we hold to the lower demands and feel that they are primary, so long as we feel that we must give our whole thought to our worldly concerns even though it means letting our higher interests go, we shall never be free from action. Though we should sit perfectly still and not move our hands or feet, still our minds

would go on surging. In fact it would be most difficult for us to sit still at all, because we would be thinking of so many things waiting to be done. If, on the contrary, we make the inner our first consideration, a sense of quiet will arise within us, while outwardly there will be less and less for us to do. People will feel that they do not have so much claim upon us. They will begin to realize that we are living for something greater than the small issues of life and they will be ashamed to besiege us with their petty demands. When we learn to live our life at that higher level, we shall be shielded by our own consciousness from the trivial and the unimportant, and it is in this way that we gradually gain freedom from action; it is by reversing our sense of values and always considering the divine obligations first.

Always the Divine first, let that be our attitude of mind. "God, what wilt Thou have me do?" It is not that the Lord would have us fail in our worldly duties, any more than a mother would try to prevent her child from fulfilling its little tasks. A mother is always trying to keep true her child's sense of values. So we need never fear that if we take this course the Lord will lead us away from our genuine obligations.

Actually no one can ever, even for an instant, remain inactive, "for all are impelled by their nature to act incessantly." There is nothing more foolish than to suppose that we can ever stop acting. The very conditions in the human body mean that we have to act in order to maintain its existence. Since that is the case, it is useless to wait for a less active life before taking up our spiritual practice. Such an idea is one of the tricks of *Maya,* or Illusion. We always think that when we get through our immediate task then we shall have a little leisure; but before we have finished the work in hand, another task has arisen, and still another. We

say: "When this is done I shall have time for prayer and meditation or some more serious occupation." Thus we go on and on, finding excuses for our inertia: We are always seeking some reason to justify our doing the worldly thing and giving our strength and energy to worldly concerns.

Now all this does not imply that we have to abandon what is needful to our bodily existence. I think if we should make a study of our actions, we should find that three-fourths of them are not in connection with the necessities of life at all: they are for indulgences. We go hither and thither, using up our strength in getting clothes, for instance, not because we need them, but because we wish to be adorned by them. We wish to have more than we need. So it is with everything else. If we were only willing to reduce our life to a simple basis; if we could only get a true idea of the real nature of riches and of poverty, we should begin to realize that poverty of the soul is far more terrible than poverty of the body. Even now we know soul-poverty, but we do not give it a name. We know that nameless gnawing at the heart, that sense of emptiness in life; that wondering what we shall do next. There is no worse poverty in the world than this. We see it sometimes on the soul-starved, hunger-ridden faces of the rich in their broken nerves, in their restless lives; yet in our own lives we do not acknowledge it because our body is still so real to us.

All our philanthropy is on a false basis; it is concerned merely with the giving of food and a place to live. If when we go to those who are in need, even while we are seeking to alleviate their physical hunger, we could make them see that, dreadful as it is, it doesn't compare to the hunger within, if we could give them a deeper sense of values as the strongest fortification against all the onslaughts of life, our philanthropic work would have a very different effect.

We now come to a definition in the Gita of what it means to be active in the spiritual sense and what it means to be active in the physical: "He who restraining the organs of action . . . " (That is, he who sits down and says, "I am now going to live a life of meditation!") "He who restraining the organs of action, sits holding thoughts of sense-objects in his mind, that self-deluded one is called a hypocrite." This refers to the man who imagines that just by sitting still and meditating and reading holy books he is living the spiritual life. But that is not the way at all. The spiritual life means living with the consciousness of the Spirit. Your hands and feet may be busy every minute and yet you may be spiritually centered in your thoughts and feelings.

"Man, walk with the consciousness of the Spirit within thee!" said Pythagoras. What a wonderful text to carry with one! That is what it means to be spiritual; not sitting down and doing nothing and being aware some of the time of God and some of the time of your senses, and most of the time of your self. Meditation, in that sense, has nothing to do with it. A meditative life means a continuous flow of thought toward God. It can flow through every task, through every action, through every condition of life. That is being spiritual. The Gita tells us that that man who, drawing inward and restraining his mind and senses, "follows without attachment the path of action with his organs of action, he is esteemed."

You may say, "How can I draw inward when I have to be giving my thought to my task?" If you examine yourself I think you will discover how very little of your thought actually goes into your task at any time. While you are doing it, you will find that you are generally thinking of other things, or of what benefit it will be to you, or of what pleasure it will give to someone else.

Spiritual practice does not mean withdrawing your mind from the task to God, it means withdrawing your mind from all these things to the task, and then, having done that, offering up the task to God. It is exactly the same process of mind that a lover goes through. Everything he does he does in relation to the beloved; everything is shared with her; and that must be the attitude of one following the path of action or work. Constantly the mind and senses must be restrained from non-essential things and fixed on the work in hand that it may be done as perfectly as possible, in order that it may be worthy to offer to the One Beloved.

Anything that does not move toward perfection cannot possibly draw us toward God. But in order to do our work as perfectly as possible the whole of our energy and attention must be given to it. When we realize this, concentration at once becomes natural. There is not the smallest task that we can do for the Beloved One that does not need the whole of us to do it; otherwise it does not move toward God — it cannot. It cannot carry us to the Ideal.

Every movement of the mind should be as precise as possible. The very way we walk is an indication. The person who has this feeling will never hit against things; he will never overturn things; he will never break things. As he picks up something he will remember that it is not his, that it belongs to God. It is just as much a sacramental vessel as one that is used on the altar. For him, everything is sacred, everything is holy. "Take off the shoes from off thy feet, the ground that thou standest on is holy ground!" — that should be the attitude of mind. It is a wonderful attitude to have. Nothing so quickly wipes out the consciousness of "me" and "mine", which more than anything else betrays us into carelessness in relation to our individual thought and deed. We say, "I am doing this for myself, so it does

not matter how I do it." Always you will find that inefficiency grows from that idea.

"This world is bound by actions, except when they are performed for the sake of sacrifice. Therefore do thou perform action without attachment." That is the measure which divides spiritual action from worldly action. The action is the same; it is thought that determines its nature. A holy thought transforms an ordinary act into something totally different. There was once a man who wanted to shock Sri Ramakrishna; so he went to him and sang an improper song. Sri Ramakrishna, instead of being shocked, smiled and sang another song a little more improper. Of course it made the man feel very silly — like a little child who has tried to do something to shock his parents and has not succeeded. By doing just what the man did, but with another attitude of mind, Sri Ramakrishna showed up his action in its true light and proved that the impropriety lay in the man's mentality, not in the song. We must never judge a person by his action, but by the quality of his action.

You need never try to change your action; you need only do it as a sacrifice to God. Turn it into a sacrament and it becomes a great opportunity. For the spiritual man there is no such thing as a hindrance. Everything is an opportunity in his life. That is what doing things as a sacrifice means: it means a sacrifice to God. Therefore go on and perform any action, no matter what it may be, but do it without selfish attachment, then "there is no possibility of evil results." The spiritually minded man, however, does not think of the results. He has no preconceived ideas of any kind. He only knows that a task has been set before him and that he must do it as well as he can and as an offering to the Supreme. This is the lesson we are given to learn, and in the learning of it a disagreeable task may be given to us again

and again, until we come to feel that it is a special thing that God asks us to do, but for His sake instead of ours. When we know that, then we turn to it with love and do it with our whole heart. No matter how insignificant it may be, we would not want any other assignment. The Lord is always giving us things that we do not know how to do, because He wants us to learn how to do them, and we are always trying to escape, trying to avoid doing those very things, and so the lesson has to be repeated and repeated. Therefore Sri Krishna states: "The world is bound by actions except when they are performed for the sake of sacrifice." He then goes on to deal with the question of sacrifice in relation to the *Devas* or gods.

Those who are not acquainted with Eastern philosophy, may not know what is meant by the term "gods." It does not mean brazen images; it means different aspects of the one Creative Power. Very few people know how to worship one God. We talk a great deal about such worship, but we do not do it. Until we know what oneness means we cannot worship oneness. The man who truly worships but one God sees oneness everywhere. We, however, look to a God that is partial in His favors; we pray that this thing and that be given to us, and so, according to the Hindus, we worship the god of success or good fortune, or of some other form of personal benefit. People who are still asking for things, worship the gods. They do not know the One God, because they who do know that absolute One, never ask for anything. They realize their oneness with Him and are concerned with nothing less; no personal desire can ever rise in their heart again.

The true devotee never takes the first fruits of anything. The first is offered to the Lord; what is left to the sacrificer is looked upon as the remnant of the sacrifice. Sri Krishna

refers to this when He says: "The righteous, eating the remnant of sacrifice, becomes free from all sins; but the unrighteous who cook for themselves eat sin." Whatever we do for ourselves alone, no matter how high the results may seem to be, partake of sin, in the sense that self-centered action forms the basis for all degradation; it tends to lower rather than elevate. Thus once more we see that it is the attitude of mind not the bigness or smallness of an action that marks its spiritual value. For example, how many people prepare food with the thought that they are not doing it for themselves but as an offering to God? One who has not the habit of doing this might think it very foolish, but not he who understands.

In India, every power that comes to a man, of glory or honor, is offered at once to the Lord. As Christ said: "Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory: it all belongs to Thee!" If we can gain that mindfulness, that God comes first always, then there can be no sin for us, no limitation. Whether we know it or not, we are moving away from limitation toward freedom, wisdom and greater knowledge.

One of the subtle tricks that our ego plays upon us along the way is to persuade us to measure our progress. When it is not able to draw us back into the world, or to desire worldly things, then it tries this deception, and we begin to pull ourselves up by the roots, as it were, to see how much we have grown. But that is not the way to walk the path of sacrifice. We should leave it entirely to God. We have nothing to do with our progress at all; we should even be willing not to progress. Whatever God gives back to us as "the remnant," we should take with perfect content, whether it be growth or non-growth. That is to say, we have given all to God and we accept without question whatever God gives to us in return. If He gives us nothing, that too is as it should be.

INDIAN SUMMER

By Sister Daya

A sound all sadness drifts along the breeze,
The silky rustle of the restless trees,
The sound, as 'twere, of that frail silver haze
Which veils with mystery these jewel days.
Now Nature gazes at her garnered sheaves,
Upon the ruby-amber of her leaves,
And whispers: "This is finished; this is best.
For this I strove from April green to gold,
Transforming old to new, and new to old.
The whirling wheel brought life; it now brings rest."

Ah, Nature, may that Autumn leaf, my heart,
Show the perfection of thy finished art
When my October comes with torch alight
To make less somber winter's ivory night.
Grant that it float not forth all pale and dead,
A shell of dust to crumble 'neath the tread,
Foreworn and dry, with tender edges curled,
But rather let it flame with tints from thee
And whirl in splendour from the parent tree,
Borne on the winds of freedom round the world.

This do I pray: life glorifying death —
Vibrant, resplendent life with pulsing breath!
Yet, Mother, say: this waning of the year,
Is it still far? Peace would indeed be blessed.
Oh, to lie still, ingathered to thy breast!

Fill us with a gallant and undaunted spirit, that we may be diffusers of life, invigorating all we meet. —*Selected.*

WHEN PEACE COMES

(An Address given at the Vedanta Centre, Boston, October 2, 1949)

By Srimati Gayatri Devi

Today the whole world is remembering "the little brown man." He is India's Great Soul — Mahatma Gandhi — whose birthday falls on October 2nd. It is characteristic of mankind to put a man on the pedestal if he happens to achieve true greatness. In a country like India, we especially find that great souls are not only honored and reverenced; they are actually worshipped. They are treated like gods and placed on high thrones, while other men worship at their feet.

Usually such treatment of the great takes place after their passing. Time has a way of eliminating man's awareness of human imperfections. Often a person is criticized, judged, or even torn to pieces. Not infrequently a great soul goes through such experiences during his life. However, when he is gone all such matters are likely to be forgotten. Only his goodness is remembered, his greatness is appreciated, and men come forward to offer him the honor which is his legitimate share.

It is interesting to observe that Mahatma Gandhi received world-wide recognition while he lived because he was a man who was fulfilling a very great mission and his fellowmen had a measure of appreciation of him. Here we may leave alone his colossal service to his Mother Land. Let us think in larger terms and acknowledge the service he rendered to the world at large. Gandhi was a personage who lived in a warring age, the age that invented and used the atom bomb. Gandhi was the product of an era which sanctioned and witnessed global wars. In such an age lived a man who believed in peace, who showed the world that the way of

peace can be a more effective weapon than ruthless mechanical devices with which we cope with the world's evils.

We really believe from the depth of our being that evil can be handled only in one particular way. Man must rise up in arms against it; he must wage war against it with all the facilities at his disposal; and if necessary, he must invent and use diabolical means to root out evil. But Gandhi believed otherwise. He taught something totally different. He showed that evil can be conquered by means of peace. He was convinced that it could be completely abolished by peaceful measures. Millions of men who were his followers came to see the practical utility of such teaching as they watched him and his daily use of such means.

By this we must not conclude that Gandhi was peaceful in a sense that he was absolutely passive. He was waging a war, the war against the form of evil which deprived his country of its freedom; he was fighting against evil imposed upon India from outside. Gandhi was not sitting idle and saying, "Destiny will take care of it. Let us pray to God and wait until the undesirable conditions are removed by a stroke of destiny." No, he took active part and actively exercised the means he had wisely and skilfully evolved in order to liberate his people. But he did all this in a unique way, altogether unheard of in world history.

Before we consider peace in our personal life, let us for a moment review it as it is found in the world at large. I am sure we are all looking forward to the time when we can say, "At last peace has come." A few years ago when the world was engaged in war and divided against itself, we used to say, "When the war is over and peace comes, all will be right." Well, the war did pass; the man-made war came to an end. But we discovered, after it had ceased, that its aftermath was also a great evil because it disturbed

the peace, in the lives of individuals, groups, nations, in fact, of the entire world. It is this which makes us realize more than ever, and with stronger conviction, that the way we use in ending wars and bringing peace is not the right way.

We think that in order to keep peace we must have war, as if by war we can really establish peace on earth! The enlightened souls do not believe in this; and if we even partially share their conviction and idealism, we will come to the same conclusion: the world can never have peace by repeated wars. The warring way can never be the means of establishing peace. We are utterly deluded in this respect.

Of course, at that point we would naturally ask, "What, then, is the way?" To answer the question we must first consider the primary issues of the individual's life: his beliefs, desires, ideals, aspirations, his strength and weakness. In order to see the day when peace will really have come, we have to prepare ourselves in a way for which we hardly find ourselves ready because within us are the various forces constantly waging war one against the other. A Christian thinker points these out in the following passage: "Five great enemies to peace inhabit with us: avarice, ambition, envy, anger and pride. If those enemies were to be banished, we should infallibly enjoy perpetual peace."

One can comment on such a statement indefinitely. We take one by one these natural evils found in human beings and by a process of logical explanation can prove that avarice, ambition, envy, anger and pride habitually interfere with peace. Therefore, the conclusion would be: let a man renounce these if he wants peace. But where is the man who is willing to renounce them? Is man big enough to say to himself, "I want to part with envy, pride, anger, ambition and avarice?" Even if he recognized that it would be a tremendous achievement for him to make such renuncia-

tion, is he strong enough to carry it into practice? He will soon discover that these are powerful forces controlling his action. It is not easy to renounce pride, anger and greed. It is difficult for man to live without ambition, envy and avarice.

He will argue, "What is there to live for if my desires are not fulfilled?" A man has to be different to go against his nature; he must be superior. Is it not true that the man of peace, who has conquered the forces of his nature, is a superior person? Mahatma Gandhi was this type. That is the reason he could challenge the world. Men tried to sway him from his course by saying, "You are a dreamer, a visionary. You will never succeed. You are going to fail." But he did not fail; instead, he won. Because Gandhi had renounced all avarice, ambition, anger, pride and envy from his private and public endeavor, he could carry on a campaign in a peaceful way and inspire others to do likewise.

In our personal life, of all conditions it is peace we desire and value most, and of which we have the greatest need. Every one can testify to the fact that when we are without peace of mind, we are quite lost. Even a very well-integrated person, who is properly adjusted to life, passes through periods of peacelessness. Something in his own nature may stir; he becomes disturbed or restless. How does he feel then? He is no longer at home within himself. We know this from our own experience. We are never at ease within ourselves when our mental peace is missing. Whatever may be the cause — a legitimate reason or an excuse created by the mind — the truth remains that such a state is most undesirable. Therefore, when it is upon us, we consciously and unconsciously strive to regain what we have lost.

This reveals how deeply, intrinsically, instinctively we

love peace. Although we may not always know how to achieve it in the largest measure, or to live by it from moment to moment, or to make it a part of our existence, yet all of us want peace above all else and with our whole being. However, the peace we ordinarily desire is frequently conditioned by our outer life and tempered by our everyday experience. We are peaceful only if all is going well and we are not harassed by problems nor struggling against circumstantial difficulties.

Invariably man's peace is conditioned by health, wealth, good fortune, friendship or material advantage. This being the case, let us bear in mind that we are likely to lose our peace whenever these conditions are altered. Is it not a fact that life revolves in two definite aspects through reversible duality? We seldom can depend on the things we desire most. There is an element in life which is altogether changeable and fluctuating. Therefore, we need to reach out for That which can be our life-saver, our shelter of safety, the very source of protection against all changes. When through observation and thoughtfulness we discover that the peace we enjoy is neither permanent nor unconditioned, we turn inward. We learn that it is futile to depend on outer circumstances for peace. Thus we begin to rely less and less on the passing things and strive to establish ourselves upon the inner strength. That is the way of the great persons and the stalwart souls whom we admire. They gain independence from external conditions by taking their stand upon Something they have found within themselves.

We have heard over and over that man can find peace within himself. This mind of ours, like a body of water, is frequently in ripples of emotional disturbance. The same mind can be brought to a state of perfect tranquillity. All waves of joy and sorrow can be made to subside.

You ask, "How can it be possible?" It is only possible when we become the inner man who derives his strength, wisdom, understanding, the very perspective of life, from his hidden depth. You see, we must realize that within us lies the storehouse of peace. The spiritual beings have told us this. Gautama Buddha spoke of an "Island of Peace." His disciples became quite excited over the idea. We need to remember that even the disciples of Great Souls are often turbulent in mind; they have much to overcome. Buddha's disciples thought perhaps they could run away from the turmoil of the world and find peace on this island. Thus they asked Buddha where it was, whether in the east or the west, in the north or the south. They were ready to start on a journey to find it. But the Master told them that this island had no geographical location; the country was entirely spiritual and could not be found on the map of the earth. Only, it existed within themselves.

Here we see the similarity between the teachings of Christ and Buddha. Christ spoke of the "Kingdom Within," and proved by example how peaceful a person can become by living therein. When the whole world had turned against Him, He did not lose His deep inner peace. Now, does not this show that there is something man possesses which is his great asset, a tremendous treasure?

"What is it?" we ask. It cannot be defined by names. Some call it God or the Spirit in man; others term it Truth or Divinity; again it is man himself, his real Self. As this undefinable part of man becomes more pronounced so that he himself is aware of it, he becomes the man of peace. This peace which emanates from a highly evolved soul is by no means the ordinary conditioned peace; it is that which "passeth all understanding."

How wonderful it would be if we, who live under stress

and strain, caught in war and disaster, could find That which would keep us afloat, and above fear and crushing defeats! If only we could truly make ourselves safe and strong with an abiding sense of inner security. Let us bear in mind that such an end cannot be achieved by changing life's natural course so that it may meet our demands. Even if we tried, the venture would eventually result in failure. We can never, never alter life to suit our selfish desires. But finding something within ourselves, we learn to react differently towards life's inevitable issues. Our outlook broadens; we are no longer governed by fear; and problems begin to solve themselves, freeing us from turmoil.

It is tremendously important for an individual to know this, and still more important for him to practice what he knows as truth. We cannot merely say, "I will live peacefully when my own personal problems are solved and when the world outside does not throw its weight on me." Such an attitude would be like that of the man in Sri Ramakrishna's parable who sat on the beach and watched the breakers, hoping that he would take a bath after the waves had subsided. But he waited in vain, as the waves never ceased, and he returned home without a plunge in the ocean.

The story holds for us a lesson. We say, "I am lacking in peace of mind because there are forces at work. Let me wait until they are no longer active." That time will never come. What we should say is this: "Who can walk life's highway avoiding its good and ill, its advantage and disadvantage, its hopes and frustrations? These are before me, but I have nothing to fear as long as I am fortified from within. I have the power to meet whatever comes my way." No sooner such philosophic attitude steadies our vision, we neither rebel nor resist nor set ourselves on the warpath. Thus we pacify the force in our own being which, if re-

leased, would invariably create friction between ourselves and the life without.

This to my mind is the way of peace: looking at all things correctly, adjusting ourselves properly, maintaining our bearing and carrying on the work of living with the sense of well-being. For the man of peace, all is well; it is his habitual state of good health. No superficial happenings disturb his mind; they never sway the basic tranquillity of his consciousness. Sri Ramakrishna tells us that a line drawn on a body of water does not exist. One cannot mark water. Similarly, the spiritual man who is established in peace can only have superficial marks upon his mind; he is never marred or deformed by life's experiences. He remains untouched.

Is it too much to expect such a state of being for ourselves? Should we not aim at what we need and want most, even if it is difficult to attain? Shall we not be willing to make sacrifice for it? Often people say they will make any sacrifice for the sake of peace. Some people go to the extreme of suppressing themselves because they love peace and are even crushed in the process. That is not the way; it should never be the way. We must learn to take our stand on the bedrock of truth and not seek peace through weakness and fear. Peace is not for him who is soft, cringing and frightened. It is not the negative effect on the mind which, being afraid, withdraws itself from everything that causes it hurt. Peace is powerful, it is mighty, it is complete.

Can peace be mighty, and at the same time gentle? We know it to be both, as illustrated by great souls. An ordinary man shows his vehemence, passion and fire by resisting and fighting, whereas a peaceful man faces his adversary gently and quietly pours down upon him cool water of

peace from his inner self. These are the two ways: the common and the higher. And these are followed by men according to their instinct, inclination and capacity for practical demonstration of idealism.

What will be the way for us? Whatever we want. If we love and believe in peace, and we are absolutely certain it is that we want to practice, we will succeed in our efforts. Instead of rising up against forces in a turbulent spirit, we will fortify ourselves by our inherent power and without striking will overcome them. Nothing really can overthrow or even withstand our inborn divine potentiality.

Here I am trying to put into words that which is spiritual and intangible. Only by seeing the expression of such a force in the individual's life can we be convinced that it does exist. Fortunately for us, there are always examples at hand. We do not always have to search through the pages of history to discover some past figure who followed the peaceful way. We can find someone near by. The world continues to produce a few rare human beings who assure us that the application of the higher way is the solution for the individual as well as for humanity.

Mahatma Gandhi is one of them, who has increased our faith in peace. We need not superficially praise him for his achievement; but we should strive to imbibe his ideas and ideals and thus gather fresh impetus for practice. Yes, even in this atomic age, when the majority of the world will continue to believe in war and engage themselves in war, justifying their actions under the cover of some fine ideological name, you and I should care to live differently. We can be so inspired by truth and idealism that we will be given the courage and opportunities for using them without compromise.

If you happen to be such a one, then you will have all

the incentive and inspiration to go on. In a wartorn world you will be the rare individual living for peace, working for it, radiating it, and influencing all who touch your life. It is something that can be imparted to others when produced from within. Let us believe in it, let us find our own relationship with it; and once we have become convinced, let us begin to think, act and move in a manner which blends with our inner feeling.

It is then we will be able to bring peace and not turmoil into the world and will no longer contribute disorder and unrest. Our weight will be placed on that side of the scale which will outweigh evil. We will be instrumental in counteracting the ills from which mankind habitually suffers. We will have help, blessing and benediction to offer our fellowmen. It is peace that heals and soothes and comforts; it is peace everyone needs desperately. Let us then strive for it in greater earnestness so that it may come now and become our personal possession. Once we have accomplished this, our service to man will be marked with a light which is God's choicest gift.

In India there came a man in our own generation who inspired us to great endeavor, ever reminding us that thought and action should never be divorced from moral principle, that the true path of man is truth and peace. Under his guidance we laboured for the freedom of our country, with ill-will to none, and achieved that freedom. We called him reverently and affectionately the Father of our Nation. Yet he was too great for the circumscribed borders of any one country, and the message he gave may well help us in considering the wider problems of the world.—*Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, in an address to the Congress of the United States on October* 13, 1949.

IN THE NAME OF MY PEOPLE

By Nipo Tahoche-Num Strongheart
of the Yakima Nation

(Strongheart is one of the chiefs of the Yakima tribe of Indians in the State of Washington. He gave the following address on the evening of August 30th, 1949, in the temple patio of the Ananda Ashrama at La Crescenta, California. The Chief spoke under the light of the moon, which enhanced the dignity of his bearing and brought out the full glory of his great feathered Chief's bonnet, beaded robe, moccasins, etc. He spoke into a recording machine, but unfortunately the wire in the recorder broke, so that only a very small portion of his talk was preserved. Very graciously, however, he consented to a later interview with Sister Daya, which was successfully recorded and which gives in full measure that which was lost. The interview follows this article. Upon the evening in question, before addressing his audience, the Chief held up his Peace Pipe toward the four cardinal points, invoking the blessing of the Great Spirit and intoned a prayer in his own tongue.)

Mah'sie Ote, laugh Sagh'alie Tyee
Kwann wa-wa Kopa delate yieni.
Kopa Ko'no' way mitlite. Lolo O'koke
Wa-wa Kopa Sagh'alie Tyee.
Sagh'alie Tyee, Nike hy-as ticky
Nika Mit'whit Wake Siah
Kopa Mika.
Nika Klak-sta
Alta wa-wa Mit-lite Taka
Klosh Kah-Kwa

Grateful am I, Father Sun-God,
Silent Witness to all that is,
Carrying the Message to the
Great Maker of all.

Great Maker of all, A needy one
stands before Thee.
I, who now speak, am he!
Amen.

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, friends, and—may I say? — our good brothers. I say this in all sincerity and I do sincerely hope that before this evening shall pass, each of us may have a better and truer understanding of the other. And may we have awakened in the heart a greater spirit of fellowship and brotherhood between us, so that in the future we may walk shoulder to shoulder as friends and brothers. I am not speaking words just merely to talk; I feel this deep in my heart, because it so comes that I happen to be of two bloods, my mother being of the Yakima people, my father, one of your people. Thus I have one half of one blood and one half of another, which causes me at times to feel a rebellion within me, often not knowing which people I should stand by, my own people — my mother's people — or my father's people. There are many times when that confusion within me leaves me standing alone, somewhat at a loss; and because this constant rebellion within me makes me feel the need of an inward fellowship and harmony, I know that there is an equal need of an understanding between the two races.

Perhaps it was intended that I should be of two bloods in order that I might be an emissary for my mother's people and for your people as well. Savage, primitive, pagan — whatever you may like to call us, it doesn't matter. Maybe we were those things; maybe we did fight; but you people fight more than we ever did. We did have tomahawks, but we didn't have guns; we didn't have atom bombs; we didn't have airplanes to kill: we just had means of self-defense. Well, that is natural. God gives the deer antlers; buffalo, horns; all living creatures the means to defend themselves. If I come and try to chase you out of your home, and rob you, you will defend yourself, even if you have to use some means of destruction. So it was only natural that we people fought for our home, just as you people would fight for yours. That

is the way I read it in history. But one of the things that hurts me is that when I read about the Indian and white man's war, every time the white man happened to win a battle, Oh yes, then it was a grand and glorious victory, but whenever the poor Indian happened to win a battle in self-defense, that was an outrageous massacre.

Well, whatever the past may have been, it doesn't matter now. That is all gone. You people are not responsible for the deeds of your forefathers; we are not responsible for the deeds of our forefathers. The way people live — that is what counts. When I meet with a person, I do not ask who his grandfather was, I want to know who the man himself is — what he is — that is all I care about, and that is how all our people are. That is why we like to have you people really know us and not judge us by what you read in the books or happen to see in the motion pictures, about Indians being wild and fighting with one another and killing the poor white man. Motion picture people, and writers too, do great wrong. They poison the hearts and minds of little children. A child doesn't know; he never saw an Indian; so what these books and pictures show him impresses him; they affect him. They poison his heart and they poison his mind — give him wrong knowledge, wrong information, and do an injustice to us, because they misrepresent us.

Three weeks ago, when I was at home in Yakima, I talked a long time with one of the old men (he is pretty nearly one hundred and nine years old). We sat on top of the hill, and he said: "You know, son, I like white people; but I don't understand them. Maybe they are right, maybe they are not; but they are strange to me. The white man always claims everything for himself, that he is all right and the other people are bad. He even says that this country is his. Yet we were here first. We welcomed the white man; we

gave him food; we spread our blankets and took him in, like a friend and a brother. Then pretty soon he took away all our land and pushed us back, and after he had taken the land he put a fence around it, and next, he put up a sign, "No trespass!"; and when he goes to church on Sunday, he says, 'Forgive us our trespasses!' — can't figure that out."

You people go up to the Reservation some time and see the many difficulties and hardships of some of the Indian people, and how they are pushed back over the mountains and the rivers into the desert land. They have no way to live. In some places where they are, not even a coyote could live there. You people send all kinds of relief to people over the sea, but the Indian — you forget all about him. Yet you have a doctrine called the Monroe Doctrine: "America for Americans!" But we as the first American people are left to the last. When it comes to the American flag, our people respect that flag more than do all the white people over the United States. We do not look upon the flag merely as a rag made of cloth. That is one more thing the old man said to me, and I wrote it down as he told me, so that when I pass on I can leave it with others to preserve. He said:

"Son, you know white man claims that he made this American flag. That is not so." He said: "History tells us that white woman took a little piece of cloth and made up the flag, and that was the first time it was in existence. Oh, no!" he said. "When I was a little boy I saw that flag, and my grandfather before me saw that flag, away back he saw it. How? You wait. We will sit here on this mountain on a high place, and you watch the sun going over the mountain."

Up in the State of Washington there are many mountains, and when the sun goes down you find many clouds, white clouds rolled up, one on top of the other; so he said:

"You watch! The sun is going down and you will see

how it reflects back between the white clouds, so that when the sun shines through them, there comes a red reflection. You will see there is white stripe, red stripe, white stripe, red stripe, one after another in the sky. Now you wait a little more, and pretty soon, one star, another star, many stars come out. There," he said, "is the American flag in the sky. God made the flag. It is not white man's flag; that flag is for all people. I am an American man; this is my flag more than it is white man's flag. I love that flag; I love this country, but I am a poor Indian."

Before I left home, he said: "You go out and tell white people that all Indian people love this country; we love this flag; we love this government. We like to love our white brothers, if only they will open their hearts and extend their hands and try to understand us, like friends. We try to live a good, clean life, and if they only will but accept us and show us kind treatment, we shall be willing to walk side by side with them."

So I leave this word with you. Study a little more about our people; read more about the heart and the soul of the Indian, about his qualities, his religion, his high regard for all things spiritual. We never needlessly harm a bird, or an insect, for we feel that the life in that body is just like the life in our own, only in a different form. How do I know that that little one may not have greater intelligence than myself. His body works the same as mine: there is the same spirit; so I never want to kill him or destroy him.

Our people have a Bible too, not written on paper. This bag is Indian Bible. [*Here Chief Strongheart held up a beaded bag, worked in symbolic design. It was one of several things of symbolic import, which he carried with him, including the pipe.*]

All of these different signs on the bag, with the sign in

the center, tell the story of our belief. Every Indian woman after conception, when she knows that she is to be a mother, makes up a bag similar to this and she carries it with her at all times, so that when she goes into seclusion this is her prayer. She always refers to it. It is her shield which guides her to the way of the path of life. It is the Spirit Eagle, carried by four wings — two wings here, two wings there. You can see how these two wings reach out towards the Spirit World, and these two wings touch Mother Earth, the materialized form of Mother Earth, and connect her with God. In the centre is what we call "The Land of the Great Mystery." That is why it is in dark. When it is in light, it means we know; but when it is in dark, it means we do not know: it is hidden from us.

So that is why they make their shield also with four points, meaning that it is a mystery. In the land of mystery we see the balanced cross, which represents the four times four. It doesn't mean the Christian Cross; it represents the four elements, the four seasons of the year, four stages in life, and the four cardinal points — four times four. Then inside of the shield is the Shield of the Night Sun, or the evening star, also included in the counting of the four times four. On all sides is the path to the Land of the Great Mystery, where the earth touches the sky. That is the line across here; you might say the horizon where the earth and the sky meet. This part towards the earth, like the two wings of earth, is the sky.

I do not want to go into details, but I do want to give you an idea of how the Indian believes and how he carries all these things with him at all times. You can see how he refers to the laws of Nature — not to the image, not to idolatry. Indians follow natural laws. That is how our people have always been, and it has made them very happy, and in spite

of the punishment they have received, in spite of all the deprivations they have suffered, our people still have a great deal of courage, of faith, and of spirit. We know that this material world is not everything, that when we leave this earth we go home to the place where our forefathers are, where life begins. This is not just a fairy tale. When our body is no more, the spirit still goes on, and we never die. Our people never believed in death. We never say that we die: we go on to the Spirit World.

So I leave entirely to your own judgment, your own feeling, your own sense of justice, as to whether our people should be referred to as savages, wild men and pagans, or be looked upon as the creation of God Himself — the same as you people, living under the same sky, with same Mother Earth, all partaking of the same kind of food. One man's skin may be a little different from another's, but God made that difference — not man. We are not responsible for it, and He had reasons for making it just that way.

So let us look upon each other as children of the One Great Maker, that now and in the future, here on earth and in the hereafter, we shall walk side by side as good Christian brothers, children of one mighty creation. That is all!

(*To be continued*)

There is love of wild nature in everybody, an ancient mother-love ever showing itself whether recognized or no, and however covered by cares and duties. In God's wildness lies the hope of the world—the great fresh unblighted, unredeemed wilderness. The galling harness of civilization drops off, and the wounds heal ere we are aware. . . . In the mountains, free, unimpeded, the imagination feeds on objects immense and eternal.

To the Indian mind all nature was instinct with deity. A spirit was embodied in every mountain, stream and waterfall. —*John Muir.*

FRAGMENTS OF WISDOM

From the Writings of Swami Vivekananda

This is the first principle of Vedanta, that realization is religion, and he who realizes is the religious man . . . Every science has its own method of learning, and religion is to be learned the same way . . . To become religious, to perceive religion, to feel it, to become a prophet, we have to take these methods and practice them; then if we find nothing, we shall have the right to say, "There is nothing in religion, for I have tried and failed." This is the practical side of all religions.

. . . Not only do they teach principles and doctrines, but, in the lives of the Saints, you find practices; and when it is not expressly laid down as a rule of conduct, you will always find in the lives of these prophets that even they regulated their eating and drinking, sometimes. Their whole living, their practice, their method, everything was different from the masses who surrounded them, and these were the causes that gave them the higher light, the vision of the Divine . . . We, if we want this vision, must be ready to take up these methods. It is practice, work, that will bring us up to that. . . .

The plan of Vedanta, therefore, is: first, to lay down the principles, map out for us the goal, and then to teach us to understand the method by which to arrive at the goal, to understand and realize religion.

Again, these methods must be various. . . . Vedanta understands that and wants to lay before the world different methods through which we can work. Take up any one you like, and if one does not suit you, another may. From this standpoint we see how glorious it is that there are so many religions in the world, how good it is that there are

so many teachers and prophets, instead of there being only one, as many persons would like to have it. The Mohammedans want to have the whole world Mohammedan; the Christians, Christian; and the Buddhists, Buddhist; but the Vedanta says: "Let each person in the world be separate, if you will; the one principle, the unity will be behind. The more prophets there are, the more books, the more seers, the more methods, so much the better for the world."

. . . Experience is the only source of knowledge. In the world, religion is the only science where there is no surety, because it is not taught as a science of experience. This should not be. There is always, however, a small group of men who teach religion from experience. They are called mystics, and these mystics in every religion speak the same tongue and teach the same truth. This is the real science of religion . . . The mystics do not differ. They are all similarly constituted and similarly situated. Their experience is the same; and this becomes law. . . .

Religion deals with the truths of the metaphysical world just as chemistry and the other natural sciences deal with the truths of the physical world. . . . The book from which to learn religion is your own mind and heart. . . .

The human mind is not homogeneous like the external world. According to the different natures must there be different methods. As some special sense predominates in a person — one person will see most, another will hear most — so there is a predominant mental sense, and through this gate must each reach his own mind. Yet through all minds runs a unity, and there is a science which may be applied to all. This science of religion is based on the analysis of the human soul. It has no creed.

No one form of religion will do for all. Each is a pearl on a string. We must be particular above all else to find

individuality in each. No man is born to any religion; he has a religion in his own soul. Any system which seeks to destroy individuality is in the long run disastrous. Each life has a current running through it, and this current will eventually take it to God. The end and aim of all religions is to realize God. The greatest of all training is to worship God alone. If each man chose his own ideal and stuck to it, all religious controversy would vanish. . . .

Religion is one, but its application must be various. Let each one, therefore, give his message, but find not the defects in other religions. . . .

Drink deep of the nectar of God. The man who realizes "I am He," though clad in rags, is happy. Go forth into the Eternal, and come back with Eternal Energy. The slave goes out to search for Truth; he comes back free.

The ordinary *Sannyasin* gives up the world, goes out and thinks of God. The real *Sannyasin* lives in the world but is not of it. Those who deny themselves, live in the forest and chew the cud of unsatisfied desires, are not true renouncers. Live in the midst of the battle of life. Anyone can keep calm in a cave or when asleep. Stand in the whirl and madness of action, and reach the Center. If you have found the Center, you cannot be moved. . . .

Religion is the realization of Spirit as Spirit; not Spirit as matter.

Religion is a growth. Each one must experience it himself . . . Each one may believe in whatever doctrine he likes, or in no doctrine . . . What has it to do with you that Moses saw God in the burning bush? The fact . . . does not constitute your seeing Him, does it? If it does, then the fact that Moses ate is enough for you; you ought to stop eating. One is just as sensible as the other. Records of the great spiritual men of the past do us no good whatever except

that they urge us onward to do the same; to experience religion ourselves.

It is Spirit that makes Nature move; it is the Reality in Nature; so action is in Nature, not in the Spirit. Spirit is always the same, changeless, eternal. Spirit and matter are in reality the same, but Spirit, as such, never becomes matter, and matter, as such, never becomes Spirit.

The Spirit never acts. Why should it? It merely is, and that is sufficient. It is pure existence absolute, and has no need of action. . . .

The Vedas teach that the soul of man is immortal. The body is subject to the law of growth and decay; what grows must of necessity decay. But the indwelling spirit is related to the infinite and eternal life; it never had a beginning and it will never have an end. One of the chief distinctions between the Vedic and the Christian religion is that the Christian religion teaches that each human soul had its beginning at its birth into this world, whereas the Vedic religion asserts that the spirit of man is an emanation of the Eternal Being and had no more a beginning than God Himself. Innumerable have been, and will be, its manifestations in its passage from one personality to another, subject to the great law of spiritual evolution, until it reaches perfection when there is no more change. . . .

One point of difference between Hinduism and other religions is that in Hinduism we pass from truth to truth — from a lower truth to a higher truth — and never from error to truth. . . .

Virtue is that which tends to our improvement, and vice to our degeneration. Man is made up of three qualities, brutal, human, and godly. That which tends to increase the divinity in you is virtue, and that which tends to increase the brutality in you is vice. . . .

You should cultivate a noble nature by doing your duty. By doing our duty we get rid of the idea of duty, and then and then only we feel everything as done by God.

. . . Each is responsible for the evil anywhere in the world. No one can separate himself from his brother. All that unites with the universal is virtue. All that separates is sin. You are a part of the Infinite. This is your nature. Hence you are your brother's keeper.

The first end of life is knowledge; the second end of life is happiness. Knowledge and happiness lead to freedom . . . When you hurt anyone you hurt yourself, for you and your brother are one . . .

Self-sacrifice, not self-assertion, is the law of the highest universe. The world is so evil because Jesus' teaching, "Resist not evil," has never been tried. Selflessness alone will solve the problem. Religion comes with intense self-sacrifice. Desire nothing for yourself. Do all for others. This is to live and move and have your being in God.

This world is not for cowards. Do not try to fly. Look not for success or failure. Join yourself to the perfectly unselfish will and work on. Know that the mind which is born to succeed joins itself to a determined will, and perseveres. You have the right to work, but do not become so degenerate as to look for results. Work incessantly, but see something behind the work. Even good deeds can find a man in great bondage. Therefore be not bound by good deeds or by desire for name and fame. Those who know this secret pass beyond this round of birth and death, and become immortal.

Do not despair of your life. You have force enough to overcome your obstacles. . . . Provided you *think* well, the heavens falling or the earth gaping, will be music for you to march by. —*Henry David Thoreau.*

FROM A DISCIPLE'S NOTEBOOK

(Continued from the Fall Issue)

"There are some souls who are like the season Spring: wherever they go they carry the song of birds and the fragrance of flowers."

So run the words of a devotional song—or their approximation — based on a saying by the great Hindu sage, Sankaracharya.

This song was often on the Swami's lips during the months of his novitiate at the Madras Monastery, and seemed to those around him so native to his spirit, that they dubbed him *Basanta,* or Spring.

In ancient tales we read of mortals becoming immortal through bathing in the fabled "waters of life." Springtide resembles these waters. Its very name signifies a gushing forth from the ever-flowing Source of existence. Yearly it floods with resurgent life Mother Earth herself. Yearly she bathes and yearly is reborn, and even the *rigor mortis* of winter cannot obliterate the knowledge of the eternal harvest waiting in her heart for the vernal hour to strike.

Something of all this the disciple feels as she thinks of the Swami, and so it must be with all those who were privileged to live in his atmosphere as members of his community. For in truth not only did a springtide beauty of body and being seem to pervade him, but he brought to all who crossed his path and who were ready to receive it, the blessed assurance of a never-ending loveliness, of a life synonymous with bliss. His students still thrill to the wonder of his coming, nor can they forget the benediction of his presence, which neither time, nor age, nor any death, so they feel, can cause to "vanish into nothingness," for they too carry a harvest in their hearts.

Naturally such a presence brought not merely peace and joy: it brought healing as well, as we have seen in the case of Sister Devamata, healing on all planes. But it was a spontaneous healing, uncalculated and free from egotistic assumption. Two lines from one of the Swami's poems, addressed to the Deity, might well be addressed to him:

"Verily Thou art the Master of Miracle!
Thy approach filleth our soul with light of gladness.
Where Thou dwellest, the gloom of darkness can never be."

His power to lift gloom was truly miraculous. Yet there was no miracle, only a deep understanding of the human heart. If there seemed to be magic, it was the magic of genuine love. One could see it written on the Swami's face whenever one of his household suffered some injury, as when Brother George, at the California Ashrama, cut his hand down to the bone, or one of the Sisters tripped and fell on a hard brick floor. Often no healing took place, but there is no doubt that in not a few instances either a cure was effected very quickly or was greatly hastened, seemingly by the Swami's touch and prayer. He never claimed to heal (he never claimed anything as from himself) but he did believe that under certain conditions of faith, purity and surrender, this spontaneous healing could occur through the grace of the Infinite Mother. In other words, given the season Spring, flowers will appear.

The disciple realizes that cases of healing are open to question. Seldom are they as convincing to others as to the person healed. Her experience with this phase of the Swami's ministry was immediate and personal.

At the time when she came to the Centre at Boston, she was still suffering acutely from a condition that had made her an invalid for sixteen long years, during which period she had gone through an operation to save her life, the oper-

ation itself having nearly proved fatal. Those first months in Boston, therefore, were physically most difficult, and frequently it was all she could do to perform her allotted tasks or drag herself upstairs to her room. She was in almost constant pain, from which she saw no release, and the nights gave her little chance for sleep or even rest.

One morning as she sat in the Swami's study while he discussed certain matters with the Senior Sister, she was aware of utter weariness and discouragement, which no doubt permeated her atmosphere; for suddenly the Swami looked toward her with deep concern, and said: "My child, you look very badly this morning. Are you feeling ill?"

"Yes, Swami," she replied. "I have had a very bad night and I am in pain."

He beckoned to her and she went and knelt beside his chair. With compassion manifest, he closed his eyes as if in prayer and laid his hand lightly upon her. It was only for a moment, and then she went on to her regular duties; but that moment seemed to take all pain from her and a definite recovery followed almost at once. Soon she forgot that she had ever been ill, and through what must forever seem to her a divine grace, released through the love and pity in the heart of her Master, she has been able to give her whole strength to the service of his work for thirty years.

Physical healing always attracts more attention than inward healing, owing to the density of physical matter. Yet inward healing is basic to physical healing and far more important. For from the soul all things proceed, sickness as well as health. It is not so palpable, perhaps, to the observer — not so sensational. It cannot be weighed or measured, but often for the individual it spells the difference between heaven and hell.

The disciple remembers one who, by seeming chance, wandered into the Centre on the evening she had determined to take her own life. She was an intense introvert type, driven to desperation by tragic circumstances, and there was no wavering within as she set forth that night to fulfil her purpose. Then the lighted windows of the Centre caught her eye. She remembered reading of the Swami. It might be well to hear him this final hour. She told the disciple of all this, and of the illumination and hope that came to her as she sat in the quiet chapel, listening to his simple, life-giving words.

Others have been saved in a similar manner and countless lives through the years have been rebuilt. The Swami once stated, apropos of revivalist methods, that spiritual awakening, to be genuine, must fundamentally transform the whole nature, and that is exactly what the Swami did. His influence was basic and enduring.

The disciple cannot find words to picture the buoyancy, strength and comfort his presence always brought. That sustaining power never failed. She recalls very vividly one most trying experience of an entirely practical nature in which the Swami imparted to her the faith and courage needed to avoid an accident. Before the California Ashrama was founded, she was sent on to California to look over the ground, and some weeks later was joined in the search by the Swami. This required much touring around in an automobile, which fortunately was furnished by the disciple's brother, if a model T Ford can be designated by the more dignified title.

The trouble was that the disciple, who acted as chauffeur, was completely ignorant of the foot gear-shift, peculiar to that car. This made her extremely nervous, and one day, coming home from Pasadena at the rush hour when cars were moving in a packed mass, bumper to bumper, she dis-

covered, to her dismay, that her brakes were completely gone. A sense of panic possessed her. She wanted to abandon the car then and there, but the Swami bade her keep on. The next hour was one of utter misery. It was start and stop; start and stop, with no way to control the stopping, save by manipulation of the foot-gear, a trick she had not mastered. Strung up to the highest pitch, she felt herself break out in a profuse perspiration, and was on the verge of tears when the Swami, as it were, took over. Entirely calm and poised, he conveyed to her his quiet confidence, while his voice, vibrant yet steady, acted both as a tonic and a sedative. The trip was completed without mishap, though the disciple to this day cannot remember by what means she controlled the Ford. She felt herself a most humble and abject Arjuna in a caricature of a chariot, with a real Sri Krishna at her side. She recounts this little adventure, because it is typical of the Swami's relationship to those about him, as well as of his control and strength and spirit in the small events as well as in the big.

Finally there stands out as a precious jewel in her treasure-box of memory, a scene in the Temple patio of the California Ashrama, which seemed scriptural in its implications.

There was brought to the Temple, on Sunday afternoon, a young woman from a near-by mental institution. It was evidently the hope of the accompanying attendant that the atmosphere of the Temple might have a quieting effect on this patient who was evidently in a seriously disturbed condition.

At first she sat quiet, but manifestly on the defensive, armed against the people around her. When the Swami entered the Temple, however, and especially after he started to speak, she became increasingly restless, until finally the nurse was forced to take her away.

What then occurred was comparable to certain scenes from the New Testament, for once outside, she refused to go farther and lay down on one of the wooden benches under the library arcade. When the attendant tried to force her to go to the car, she tried to bite him, struggled and fought like an animal at bay, and screamed so loudly that those who were in the Temple wondered what was taking place.

This scene was still in progress when the Service ended and the Swami came out into the patio. The girl, by this time, was in the state of those described in the Bible as being possessed of a devil, and no one ventured to go near her; no one except the Swami. Without a moment's hesitation he started to walk toward her, undeterred by the restraining hand and voice of one of the workers who anxiously expressed her fear for his safety, and volubly insisted that he should keep away from the girl. The disciple remembers the sense of perfect confidence that possessed her own heart, as she saw being enacted before her eyes, something which up to that time she had only read about, in connection with the Christ and the Buddha, and the lesser holy ones.

As the Swami approached the poor, demented creature —and while the people called out to him not to go too close and not to touch her -- suddenly all her frenzy departed; the lines on her face relaxed, great tears started to roll down her cheeks, and as the Swami reached out his hand to her, she caught it in both of her hands and kissed it. Then she spoke to him quite rationally and with a deep conviction that he could help her. When finally he told her that she had better go, she went quietly and without a word of protest. Whether or not a permanent mental healing was brought about by this encounter, the disciple does not know;

but there seems little doubt that something born out of the pure compassion in the Swami's heart, something of the Divine Itself, stilled the tempest that was raging within this tormented soul, just as surely as Jesus once stilled the actual tempest on the sea of Galilee and bade the waves to die down. Certainly a very definite impression must have been left on that sick mind, which later on may have resulted in a cure.

As the disciple has ventured to share these memories with those who like herself have been blessed by association with the Swami, voices have arisen, adding further testimony. Said one: "It was Swami who saved my leg from amputation, after my motor accident. The doctor was convinced that amputation would have to take place. He made visits to my bedside even at midnight and many times during the day. Then Swami came to me. He said: 'Are you suffering greatly?' I told him 'Yes' and he said: 'Just where is the worst pain?' I indicated the exact place, as nearly as I could, and he closed his eyes and gently laid his hand there. Instantly I felt that healing power flow into me. I knew what had happened definitely and distinctly. From then on, there was no more talk of amputation. The crisis was passed."

"What did the doctor say?" asked the disciple.

"The doctor? Oh, he thought that he had done it; but I knew who had kept me whole."

This was equally true of little Ranu (the Swami's niece who had been in the same car) who had been picked up from the road after the smash-up, with her neck broken in two places, her arm shattered by a fivefold fracture, her teeth knocked out and her jaw crushed. No one at the hospital dreamed that after such an impact this tiny slip of a girl could live.

The Swami was in Louisville at the time of the accident, but hastened on to California, and through the long hours of uncertainty which followed his return, verily carried this heroic little patient, helpless in her agony, through to ultimate recovery, sustaining her by his radiant presence and infilling her with the healing power which flowed to her from his heart. Not even the doctor could discount the potent, imponderable forces that were at work in this case. With extreme humility, he said more than once: "I am not doing this. God is doing it. There is no reason why she should live!" But live she did, to dance again with fairy-like grace, as she had done before, with practically no scar or impairment to mar her appearance or limit her free movement.

Perhaps these things cannot be proven by laboratory tests; but like the blind man in the Gospel, there is more than one who can say: "I only know that formerly I was blind, but now I can see!"

The deeper healing is still going on in the minds and souls of the Swami's spiritual children. The process may be slow, but it cannot fail, and sooner or later, each one shall justify the Swami's faith and vision.

TO BE CONTINUED

The faith that stands on authority is not faith.

—*Emerson*

Whatever else be lost among the years,
Let us keep Christmas still a shining thing:
Whatever doubts assail us, or what fears,
Let us hold close one day, remembering
Its poignant meaning for the hearts of men.
Let us get back our childlike faith again.

—*Grace Noll Crowell.*

THE BIRTH OF KRISHNA

*According to Srimad Bhagavatam**

King Kamsa, the most powerful and tyrannical monarch of his time, had a sister whom he loved very tenderly. This beloved sister, Devaki, was about to marry Vasudeva. As a token of his fraternal affection the king presented the newly affianced couple with many costly gifts, and then declared that after their wedding he himself would drive their carriage.

In due time he fulfilled this promise, and Devaki and Vasudeva were very happy at the thought of their singular good fortune in having as their driver the dreaded monarch of the surrounding territories. There were ovations and rejoicings as they drove along, and everywhere the people were filled with happiness.

All went well until, of a sudden, King Kamsa heard a voice from the void saying: "O thou foolish one, whom art thou driving so merrily? Knowest thou not that the eighth issue of her womb shall be the cause of thy death?"

At this the terrible Kamsa sprang from his seat. Drawing his sword he would have killed his sister then and there, had not Vasudeva interposed and prayed the king to spare the life of his newly married wife, reminding him that not Devaki but her eighth child would be the cause of his death, and promising, because of the King's fear, that each and every one of her children should be given over to Kamsa to deal with as he wished. Thus was King Kamsa pacified.

When in the course of time children were born to Vasudeva and Devaki, the parents fulfilled their promise to Kamsa, who, one after another, killed seven of their children as soon as they were born. This of course caused much

*Translated by Swami Prabhavananda

grief to Vasudeva and Devaki, but there was no way to escape from the hands of the tyrannical king.

When at last the time for the birth of the eighth child was approaching, Kamsa ordered Vasudeva and Devaki to be cast into prison. Accordingly, both of them were thrown into the same dungeon and bound with the same chain.

Being friendless and helpless, they were sorely troubled in their hearts. Their only consolation was in prayer to the almighty, all-loving God; and so they both prayed earnestly from the depths of their hearts, imploring him to protect them and their child. While thus ardently praying, they fell into a swoon. In the gloom of that unconsciousness a light suddenly flashed; and in that light the thick, dark cloud of misery vanished, and with it the accumulated sorrows of recent years. The sun of gladness and peace, the Lord of Love, appeared before them, healing the wounds in their hearts and cheering and exhilarating them with his benign smile. They were enveloped completely in his love; and presently they were more blissful still, for they heard him speak these sweet words:

"Father and mother, weep no more. I have come at last to your rescue and to the escape of all the good. Earth shall complain no longer. The days of the wicked are numbered. The wretched Kamsa shall die. Once again there will be peace and goodness on earth.

"Open your eyes and see me born as your child. Carry me, father, to the house of thy good friend King Nanda in Gokula. His wife, the Queen Yasoda, has just now given birth to a daughter. Exchange me for that daughter. Bring her with thee to this dungeon, leaving me on the lap of Yasoda, who will be sleeping at the time. Nothing shall bar my path."

So it came to pass that Krishna, who was to remove the

bondage of humanity, was born in a prison cell belonging to the monarch Kamsa.

Devaki kissed the sweet face of her child, forgetting all danger, but Vasudeva remembered the instructions received in vision. He clasped the child to his bosom, and at the moment he was ready to leave the prison his chains were loosened and the gates of the prison cell were opened wide. He crossed the river Yamuna, and, encountering not the least opposition, he exchanged his son for the infant daughter of Yasoda. Returning with the baby girl, he placed her on the lap of Devaki. The gates of the prison then closed, and he found himself once more in chains.

Early in the morning Kamsa heard of the birth of a female child, and at once came to the prison to see the baby. Vasudeva implored him to spare the life of the child because there could be no cause of danger in a girl. But Kamsa paid no heed to his request. He caught the feet of the tiny baby firmly in his hands, lifted it high in the air, and was about to dash it against a stone, when behold, the infant slipped from his fierce, demoniac grip and assuming high above him the beautiful form of the Divine Mother, looked down upon him, and said: "Wretch, dost thou think to avert the will of the almighty? Lo, thy destroyer is flourishing in Gokula." After these words she vanished, and King Kamsa trembled.

The same morning all the people of Gokula rejoiced when they learned of the birth of a son to their beloved King Nanda. And Yasoda, the queen mother, unaware of the exchange which had taken place, looked with joy on the sweet face of her son.

Let each man make himself as he teaches others to be; he who is well subdued may subdue others. One's own self is difficult to subdue. —*Gautama Buddha.*

REPORT

ANANDA ASHRAMA, COHASSET, MASS.

New Englanders will gratefully remember the autumn of 1949 for its gift of many sunlit days. The Indian summer lingered on, warming the earth through and through, which in return rewarded its children by a vision of unparalleled beauty.

While the Vedanta Centre Community resumed its regular residence in Boston soon after the Labor Day group-Service, technically bringing the season's activities to a close, still many were the fellowships through prayer and worship continuing at the secluded Ashrama and shared by friends and visitors.

THE VEDANTA CENTRE, BOSTON, MASS.

The Indian Festival of Durga Puja in Worship of Divine Mother, Who, according to tradition, dwells above the snows of the Himalayas and visits Her children on earth during the autumn, was welcomed with great rejoicing. The Vedanta Centre fairly shone as many hands lent themselves to preparing it for the four-day Feast.

On Friday, September 30th, fifty guests participated in the celebration, first enjoying the Hindu banquet and later listening to Srimati Gayatri Devi's interpretation of Durga Puja, after a brief period of recorded Indian music. The evening culminated with an informal talk by Darrell Miya, one of the consecrated members of the California Ashrama Community, who had won the esteem and admiration of the entire Vedanta group during his five months' visit to Boston and Cohasset.

Sunday, October 2nd, marked the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, in whose honor Gayatri Devi spoke on "When Peace Comes" at the eleven o'clock Service and on "Practice of Non-Violence" at eight o'clock.

Thanksgiving was exceptionally beautiful, attracting a goodly number to the eleven o'clock Service. The spirit of gratitude and rejoicing prevailed in every heart, heightened by the safe arrival of Charuprava Devi, Gayatri Devi's mother, from India.

The traditional Bazaar and Tea preceded the Christmas Eve Service, which is always one of the most memorable events of the year. At the writing of this report, preparations were well under way.

OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES

While Mr. William E. Ennis conducted the regular Sunday evening Service, inspiring the group by his spirit of consecration, Gayatri Devi was able to keep a long-standing invitation on October 30th at the International Student Association. She spoke on Hinduism, explaining the multiple aspects of this ancient faith. Many were the questions asked of the speaker, revealing the deep interest of the audience.

On Friday, November 4th, Gayatri Devi was the guest of Professor Carl E. Purinton, of Boston University, who had invited her to address his class on the Bhagavad Gita. This was a repetition of an engagement which Gayatri Devi had filled last year.

"The Spiritual Foundation of Brotherhood" was Gayatri Devi's subject on the evening of November 16th, when she addressed the group at the Community Church under the auspices of the Race Relations Committee Gayatri Devi emphasized the world's specific need of unity based on spiritual kinship.

PRIME MINISTER NEHRU'S VISIT

The evening of Friday, October 21st, will be recorded in the annals of the Vedanta Centre as a memorable one. When all expectation had practically been given up, India's Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, visited the Centre.

The event seemed the more remarkable because this was not included in his overcrowded program of one day in Boston. One cannot help but contrast the quiet welcome given him at the Vedanta Centre with the many exciting ovations he had received everywhere throughout America in the midst of throngs of people. With his sister, Madame Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, India's Ambassador, beside him, Pandit Nehru walked into the house, lighted everywhere by innumerable candles honoring the most beautiful of all Indian holidays—Deepali—as well as Mahatma Gandhi as one of the lights of the world. In the Chapel a special corner held the picture of Gandhi surrounded by flowers.

The Prime Minister's mood was silent, as if matching the over-all serenity of the setting. His eyes eagerly glanced upward, reading the inscriptions of the world-religions illuminated under the glass dome; he conversed with Gayatri Devi, asking questions about the Centre, and left within half an hour, graciously accepting Swami Paramananda's translations of the Bhagavad Gita and Upanishads.

Soon afterwards guests poured in, a hundred or more, taking their places for the Hindu meal Gayatri Devi had prepared in the midst of many distractions, such as going to the airport to welcome Nehru and to a reception in the afternoon in his honor at the home of the President of Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

It was a beautiful picture — all sitting with faces turned toward the candle-lit Altar, listening to tributes paid to Mahatma Gandhi. Dr. Tehyi Hsieh, the principal speaker, S. S. Wagle and Asoka Dutt, two Indian youths, and Gayatri Devi all shared the honor, voicing their thoughts and feelings appropriately.

ANANDA ASHRAMA, LA CRESCENTA, CALIFORNIA

As Autumn approaches and Thanksgiving and Christmas

begin to show, as it were, above the horizon, there is, for the members of the Ananda Ashrama and their friends, anticipation of the great Hindu Festival of the Divine Mother, and also of recent years, of the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi. The exact date of the Mother's Festival is determined by a lunar calendar, and this year that date coincided with the birthday, so that there could be a joint celebration.

The date was early — September 29th — and was observed through the three days that followed, with special Services in the Shrine, and with general rejoicing. Sunday was set for the public observance, with both Services dedicated to the Infinite Mother and to her great son, Gandhiji. Music, vocal and organ, including the singing of Gandhi's favorite hymn, "Lead Kindly Light", opened all hearts to receive the living spirit of the occasion. Between Services a special Hindu luncheon was served at the Ashrama Community House.

On Thursday evening, October 20th, the ever beautiful Hindu *Deepali,* or Festival of Lights, drew a large congregation to the Temple of the Universal Spirit, where, at eight o'clock, Sister Daya conducted a special Service dedicated to Light, inward and outward. The lights burned on all sides, on altar, on window ledges, high up, where the little flames beckoned like hands through the leaded panes of glass, in the niches dedicated to the great world religions, and in serried ranks on the speaker's platform. In the patio, likewise, pool and stone walls were outlined by flickering multicolored vigils, which sought to banish the darkness of the moonless sky.

It was an evening of spiritual enchantment that was reflected in all hearts where the inward light burned high. The voices of the Temple singers, Mrs. Faith Warriner and Mr. Carl Damkilde along with the distinguished playing of Miss

Virginia McCahon, violinist in solo and in trio formed a lovely background for the illumined picture.

Labor Day, September 5th, as has been the custom, was observed by the Ashrama members as a day of silence and meditation.

On the night of Tuesday, August 30th, Chief Nipo Strongheart, of the Yakima Nation, fulfilled an engagement which two years ago was interrupted by a sudden call from a moving picture company for the Chief's technical services. He spoke on the life and culture of his people to a goodly-sized audience, gathered together in the Temple patio. The Chief stood in the portico of the Temple under the rays of a full moon, in addition, of course, to the mellowed lights, and held the minds and hearts of his listeners enthralled, as he revealed to them, the true heart of the Indian. He himself, in his Chief's robe and bonnet, with certain symbolic insignia in his hand, exhaled the simple dignity of a true-hearted race, who had great things to give its conquerors, but whose gifts they were too blind to see. In his own person, he reminded all who heard him, of the deep wrong that was done to the Indians.

The response to the Chief's words was warm and enthusiastic, and many went home with a new understanding of their Indian brothers — the first Americans.

Chief Strongheart's message, with an explanatory note, is printed in this issue of the "Message of the East." His opening prayer is given in translation as well as in his own tongue, "the Chinook language, which is inter-tribal in the Northwest, and is spoken by numerous tribes and bands in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, also in British Columbia and the southeast coast of Alaska. It is known as 'Chinook'."

His interview with Sister Daya will be printed in the Spring issue of the *Message*.

INDEX TO VOLUME XXXVIII

PAGE

A Christmas Letter. Swami Paramananda 193

An Easter Crocus. Poem. Pauline Creesy 29

A Letter. Swami Paramananda 124

A Peasant Healer. Rev. G. J. Ferkin 42

A Talk with Great Swamiji. From "Conversations and Dialogues." 24

Conquest of Fear. Swami Paramananda 195

Differing Ways to God. Maximus of Tyre 30

Enchanted Glass. Amy Requa Russell 22

Equinox. Poem. Charlotte Miles. 143

Fragments of Wisdom. Swami Vivekananda 236

From a Disciple's Notebook 49-115-180-241

Going Ahead. Gayatri Devi 13

Immortality. From the Apocrypha 1

Indian Summer. Poem. Sister Daya 218

In the Name of My People. Nipo-Strongheart. 229

My Meeting with Swami Vivekananda. Susan Elva Dorr 188

Of Life and Death. Aline Johnson 99

PAGE

Popli and the Puppeteer. Dorothy Hughes 167

Report 60-125-189-252

Sayings of Meister Eckhart 23

Sonnet to Night. Poem 129

Sri Ramakrishna as I Understand Him. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru 144

Studies in the Bhagavad Gita. Class Talks by Sister Devamata 31-206

The Birth of Krishna. According to the Bhagavatum 249

The Conquest of Ego. Gayatri Devi 159

The Question. Poem. Roger Noble Burnham 48

The Mother in Nature. Jule Winslow 153

The Reality of Feeling. Swami Paramananda 67

The Red Mound. Maurice Collis 108

The Test of Faith. Swami Paramananda 131

Tribute to Swami Paramananda. Poem. Jane I. Raymond 98

Truth Shall Deliver. Poem. Geoffrey Chaucer 65

Unity and Universality. Swami Paramananda 3

Universal Message. Various Sources 2-66-130

When Peace Comes. Gayatri Devi 219

Whom the Self Chooses. Sister Devamata 79

Wisdom Consciousness. Sister Daya 87